

Danish Villages
Voice
Elk Horn, IA
Circ. 985
From Page:
4
9/29/2005
45707



Great Places Initiative

108

Last July, the Iowa Department of Cultural Affairs announced it had received 145 invitations from places wanting to partner with the state to become "Great Places" through the Iowa Great Places initiative. The Great Places concept emerged through the state's new purchasing results budget process in the area of transforming Iowa's economy. It is designed to bring together the resources of state government to build capacity in communities, regions, neighborhoods or districts to cultivate the unique and authentic qualities that make the places special. The Great Places initiative will also bolster the state's other successful economic tools like Vision Iowa and the Iowa Values Fund.

Coaches from throughout the state government worked with these places during the summer to help them move their Great Place visions forward. The coaches helped places identify next steps and assess their readiness to present offers to the Great Places Citizen Advisory Board to be considered on of the pilot Great Places. The board will select three pilots in early October.

"Each and every one of the 145 places that extended invitations will benefit from the Great Places initiative through the coaching process and new training opportunities," Department of Cultural Affairs Director Anita Walker said. "The three pilot Great Places will be part of our learning laboratory in this first year of Great Places, during which the state will explore coordinated focused ways to deliver technical and financial assistance to deliver powerful results."

Governor Tom Vilsack announced the Great Places initiative in his 2005 Condition of the State address, challenging state agencies and Iowans to be bold and creative and develop new partnerships for turning neighborhoods, communities, districts, regions and other areas into great places where people want to live, work, stay and play.

Lisa Riggs of the Danish Windmill Corp. attended a public forum in the spring. After her report to merchants and residents, meetings were held to form a team to represent the city of Elk Horn. The team then created and submitted an invitation by July 1 to the Great Places team made up of 18 state agencies.

A Great Places 'coach' was assigned to the group in order to help them create a Great Places Profile and develop a great offer. A presentation to showcase Elk Horn and all its potential was then given to members of the Great Places Team.

Three places will be selected from 145 invites to become Iowa's first "Great Places" by October 1, 2005. They will negotiate to identify the right mix of State resources to help the city, district, region, etc. to meet its Great Places goals. Partnership agreements between the State and the three Great Places will occur throughout the fall, with final agreements by December 31, 2005.

The Elk Horn team is now waiting for the results.